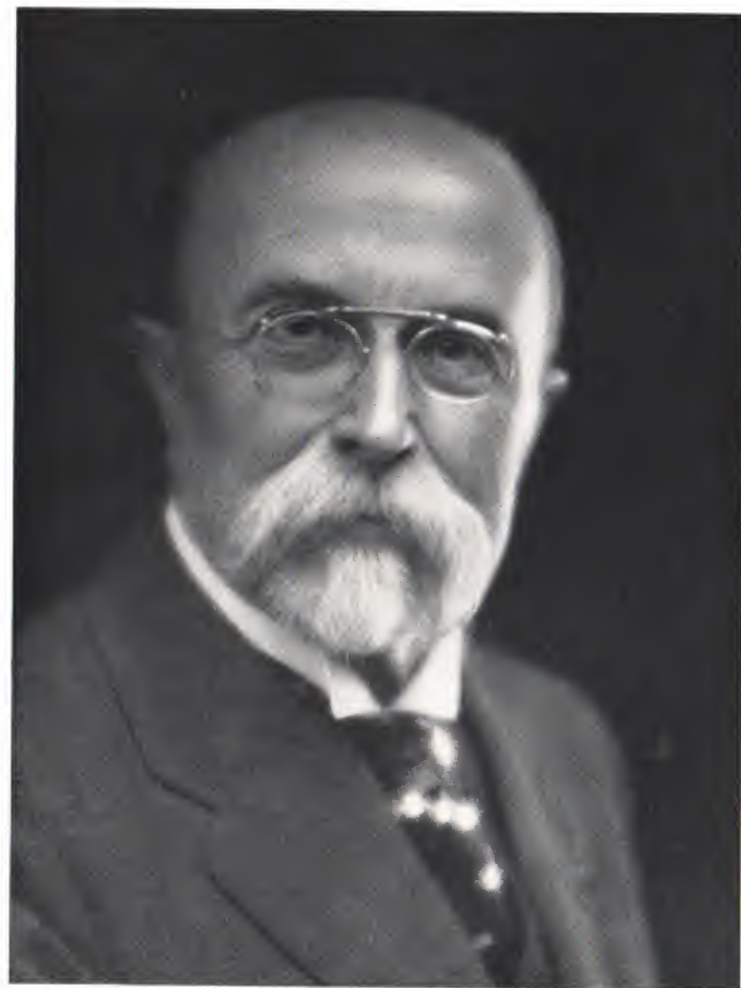


no order

THOMAS  
GARRIGUE  
MASARYK

BY  
RICHARD  
McMASTERS  
HUNT



*Reproduction of photograph of the President-Liberator of Czechoslovakia taken by Pirie MacDonald in 1920, subsequently presented by Mr. MacDonald to the University of Pittsburgh for the Czechoslovak Classroom in the Cathedral of Learning.*

## INTRODUCTION

FOR over thirty years, March 7, the birthday of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, has been the occasion for the gathering of the Czechoslovak community in the Pittsburgh district. In the years between the two world wars, while Masaryk was still alive, there was always a birthday cake. Many candles burned brightly, and many good wishes were dispatched by cable to the President-Liberator. Those early gatherings were held in private homes. In 1930 the first public gathering was held, under the sponsorship of the Kollar Club, a student group at the University of Pittsburgh. The Czechoslovak community has observed consistently March 7 anniversaries ever since with programs on the University campus arranged by the Committee for the Czechoslovak Classroom.

Thomas Garrigue Masaryk died September, 1937.

On March 7, 1939, the Classroom was dedicated by his son, Jan Masaryk, who foretold not only the role of the Czechoslovak Classroom as a shrine, but the grim course of many future events. Czechoslovakia had already been entered by the first foe in the fall of 1938 and Prague was destined to be occupied within eight days.

Since that time, these March 7 gatherings have sought to rise above the chaos caused by world political situations by looking for a ray of hope in the teachings of Masaryk as they apply to Czechoslovakia and the world. The Committee for the Czechoslovak Classroom has brought to Pittsburgh many persons of distinction who knew Masaryk personally as his students and as his friends. Sufficient time has now elapsed so that this year, on the 105th anniversary of Masaryk's birth, a man, young

Prague, 18/III/29.

Our Komenský, the teacher of all Nations,  
proclaimed education the officina humanitatis:  
I hope the American students of Keis & of  
all Universities will agree with him & fol-  
low him.

T. G. Masaryk.

Facsimile of holograph letter written in 1929, later framed in wrought iron and placed as cornerstone in Czechoslovak Classroom by Jan Masaryk, March 7, 1939.



enough to know Masaryk only from his writings and from an intensive study of recent history, has for the first time been invited to present before this group a critical study of Masaryk's life.

The Committee for the Czechoslovak Classroom in the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh feels privileged to add to the collection of writings about Thomas Garrigue Masaryk this brilliant appraisal by Richard M. Hunt, A.B., Yale University; M.A., Columbia University; Assistant Director, Free Europe Press, Free Europe Committee, Inc.

MILAN P. GETTING, JR.

Chairman

Committee for the Czechoslovakia Classroom

## ADDRESS

GIVEN BY RICHARD McMASTERS HUNT ON THE OCCASION OF THE OBSERVANCE OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF T. G. MASARYK. THE PROGRAM WAS SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CZECHOSLOVAK CLASSROOM IN THE CATHEDRAL OF LEARNING, UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH.

MARCH 7, 1955

WHEN I was invited to speak to you on the 105th Anniversary of the birth of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, I felt immediately a many-sided pleasure. First of all it provided an opportunity to return to my home in Pittsburgh, to visit with my family, and to show this interesting, dramatic city to someone who, I know, will appreciate the fabulous diversity in industry and culture which exists here.

More than that, your invitation enabled me to meet with many of you about whom I have heard a great deal in my work at the Free Europe Committee in New York. One of my tasks at the Committee has been to learn a little about the sentiments of Czechoslovak-Americans who contribute today so much to the strength of our country in ideas and skills. The longer I work in this field the more I am aware that America is really a nation of nations—a country that is forever in debt to the old world for its contribution in helping to build the new.

But, for me, there was a very special satisfaction in your

request that I speak this evening, on the birthday of T. G. Masaryk. It gave me one more occasion to think and write again about this extraordinary person—to ponder what sort of man he really was—to fathom even half-way the depth of his particular genius—and to try to express to you what relevance his ideals and his life may have for every one of us struggling today for a world that will bring forth the fullest development of man.

As I began to think on these things several weeks ago, my mind kept returning to the unique life of this unique man. Masaryk's life was a life of many achievements. He was a philosopher and skilled politician; he was a historian and statesman. Above all, he was one of those rare individuals who maintain in their lives a perfect balance between thought and action. For me there is a special curiosity in Masaryk's broad philosophy of history and I have the greatest respect for his tremendous political talents. But I cannot conceal my greatest admiration for the way in which he lived his 87 years. Set in a time of history where the old world was giving way to the new, he moved through life with that poise that marks the noble character.

He was born 105 years ago today (March 7) in Moravia, the son of a poor Slovak coachman. He was brought up without any special benefits except the love of his parents which, as he wrote, was his "only, though richest, source of inner satisfaction." He was educated in the schools of Brno and, later on, in the universities of Vienna and Leipzig. It was in Leipzig where he was studying philosophy that he displayed how seriously he had learned wisdom, by falling in love and marrying an American wife, Charlotte Garrigue from Brooklyn.

In 1882, he was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy at the newly-restored Czech University of Prague. Soon he was drawn into politics, and he became an active deputy in the Austrian Parliament.

But this was also the period when he was drafting his great

historical and philosophical studies. Beginning with the *Czech Question* (1895), he wrote a series of books which have left their impact on subsequent generations of both Czechoslovaks and students everywhere who aspire to learn his lofty insights. *The Modern Man and Religion* (1897), *Ideals of Humanity* (1902), and finally just before the break of war, *The Spirit of Russia* (1913) came from his pen. Many of you here tonight probably know and esteem these works, but I especially commend to you a re-reading of the second volume of his great work, *The Spirit of Russia*. It is deeply thought-provoking.

At the outbreak of war in 1914, Masaryk did what so many of us wish we could do but never have the chance—he took off for four months in order to think out and mature his plans of action. During this period, he decided to break with the Hapsburg monarchy and to strive for a new sort of independence for his country which had been in bondage for almost 300 years. Masaryk's country, Bohemia, was one of the earliest examples of the national state in Europe. It had a great cultural tradition: Prague University, for instance, was the first university of all Central Europe, founded in 1348, and the equal of Bologna, Paris and Oxford. Furthermore, Bohemia had a great religious tradition in the Hussite movement which established principles commonly known as Protestant, a full century before the Reformation. That his country, full of such history, should be subservient to the Hapsburgs was too much for Masaryk.

He exiled himself to London to work for its liberation.

Strangely enough, I have in mind the most vivid picture of him working in exile—clipping newspapers on the development of the war, lecturing, raising money, writing letters, making contacts, describing Austrian oppression, badgering officials; all the time pressing for the freedom and autonomy of his country. Happily, his efforts were rewarded, because he succeeded in laying the political foundations upon which he was afterwards to build up American and West European recognition of the



new, independent state of Czechoslovakia. I wonder if many of you have read his lecture, *The Problem of Small Nations in the European Crisis*, which he gave at Kings College in this period, in 1915. The influence of this speech for the cause of Czechoslovak national sovereignty must have been tremendous. Masaryk once again showed his mastery of the spoken as well as the written word.

In May of 1917, he went to Russia. It was a time of tremendous upheavals, and when the Bolsheviks seized power, Masaryk took his organized Czech legions across Siberia. Eventually he came by boat through the Pacific Ocean to America.

Then his real work of establishing the independence of Czechoslovakia began: He was introduced to President Wilson and immediately formed a decisive relationship. I have often thought that a most interesting thesis could be written on the political and philosophical interaction between these two great personalities. Coming from radically different backgrounds, Masaryk and Wilson shared a great deal in principles and practice. Perhaps some day someone of us who has the time, will also have the temerity to approach the U. S. State Department and ask permission to look at the memoranda which Masaryk and Wilson exchanged during that summer in 1918. From the notes of the conversations between these two men, I believe a fascinating story could be told.

At any rate, Masaryk finally arrived in this City of Pittsburgh, where he signed on June 30, 1918, an agreement between American Czechs and American Slovaks.

Now I believe this was a very important document, not because it officially proclaimed the existence of a Czechoslovak state, but because it placed the full prestige of American Czechs and American Slovaks behind the logical and historical necessity of the creation of a unified state. It seems to me that this Pittsburgh Agreement is often misinterpreted. Actually, the signatories of the document were *not* representatives of the peo-

ple living in Bohemia and Slovakia. Rather they were Americans who affirmed, in the presence of Masaryk, their support of postwar policies which would lead to an independent, democratic, united Czechoslovakia.

There is much talk nowadays about the status of Slovakia. In my daily work at the Free Europe Committee, I see and hear many conflicting opinions. May I presume, for a moment, to try to explain what Masaryk had in mind as he presided at this meeting here in Pittsburgh.

Masaryk, whose father was a Slovak, felt that the creation of the state of Czechoslovakia in Central Europe meant the amicable, productive reconstruction of two ancient rival tendencies. On the one hand there was the historic Kingdom of Bohemia; on the other, there was the nation of Slovakia which had been integrated in Hungary, save for passing interludes, ever since the Ninth Century, A.D.

It was Masaryk's conviction that this reconstruction would take place *on* the basis of historic right and *through* the principle of national integrity. Despite certain contradictions in this and despite the unusually complex problems involved, Masaryk felt that the successful creation of Czechoslovakia might perhaps set a genuine and lasting European precedent for states of mixed nationality.

Some of you here tonight can probably tell me where in Pittsburgh this unofficial yet fateful document was signed on that summer day in 1918. It was this document that provided the Czechoslovak Council in Exile in America with a sense of unity which was necessary for the final achievement of independence and union of the Republic. I wish that all Exile Councils today could meet with such unity and such success; but then, the Exile Councils of today do not have Masaryk's guiding hand to lead them.

After Pittsburgh, Masaryk went to Philadelphia where he launched a Declaration of Independence drafted on the Ameri-



can model. Shortly thereafter, the creation of Czechoslovakia was assured. In December, Masaryk returned from America to Europe as president-elect of a free Czechoslovak Republic, recognized as such by the Allied and Associate Powers. He was immediately greeted with honor and affection by his people. By tradition, he took up residence in the old castle of Hradcany (Ha-Rad-Chany), which sits proudly on one of the hills overlooking Prague. What memories today this imposing ancient castle must contain. Many men and many worlds have lived in its spacious rooms. It used to be the seat of the Kings of Bohemia, then the Hapsburgs, Masaryk, Benes—even Hitler himself stayed there; von Neurath, the Nazi gauleiter, occupied the castle in World War II—and, now, Communist President Zapotocky calls it his home.

For seventeen years Masaryk presided over the destinies of his country. His rule was liberal, humane, and always on the side of the best interests for the Czechoslovak people, whom he loved. He died in 1937, just as the stability of Europe was about to be destroyed once more, this time by the Panzer divisions of Hitler.

These then are the facts of the life of Masaryk. Roughly they may be divided into four great divisions: Masaryk as student; as teacher of the nation; as leader of the national cause, and finally Masaryk as father of the Czechoslovak nation. Throughout these divisions, I believe there can be seen on the surface a steady development of intellect and character, and underneath, a slow deepening of his early convictions into a profound philosophy of humanitarianism. In this sense, the childhood and old age of Masaryk were all of one piece.

Looking back from the sunset of his life, he mused: "You ask me what I consider the culminating point of my life. I would say my election to the presidency, and the fact that I am able to shoulder this burden as a great honour and an equally solemn duty. My personal satisfaction, if I may call it so, lies

deeper; for, as the head of the State, I relinquish nothing that I believed in and loved as a penniless student, a carping critic, a reforming politician; occupying a position of power, I do not seek for myself any other moral law or relationship to my fellow men, to the nation, and the world than those which guided me before."

It was this essential unity of belief which runs all the way through Masaryk's life. He said, "I have not needed to change one item of my faith in humanity and in democracy, in the search for truth, nor in the supreme moral and religious command to love men. . . . This does not spring from satisfaction that through all my life . . . I have remained myself; it is more important that the human and social ideals which I confessed have endured and become acknowledged through all those trials."

These are the words of a man who really knew himself, his country, his history, and his ideals.

But these are also the words and life of a man who is under fierce attack today by the Communists in his own country. Because they are afraid of his influence on the Czechoslovak people, the Communists have taken every opportunity to disparage him in their extensive propaganda.

For example—on April 28, 1953, the main newspaper of Czechoslovakia, *Rude Pravo*, accused him of "undermining the people of his country . . . , of the Munich treason, of the handing over of his country to the Fascists." *Radio Prague* called him "a callous enemy of the people." In a most reputable-looking volume, Communist *historians proved* that he "wallowed in the mud of deceit, larceny, and corruption." And, just before I left New York, I saw a quotation from the Communist publication *Nova Svoboda* of November 28, 1954, which read . . . "Masaryk would never use his influence to help the oppressed. On the contrary, it was he who was the principal instigator of all the measures directed against the working people."



This is what I mean when I say the Communist efforts are extensive. These quotations all come from official Czechoslovak government sources, not from independent publications on the "lunatic fringe." The campaign against the legend of Masaryk is official policy, to be propagated in every form of mass communication in Czechoslovakia.

I myself have confidence that this campaign will fail. Masaryk is too much of a man, and much too human to fall defeated under such inhuman attacks. As a matter of fact, we have definite evidence that the Czechoslovaks who live today under Communism remember the true legend of Masaryk and use it in their daily opposition to the regime. Secretly they place flowers on his grave and protest when the Communists tear down his statue. Secretly they know his humanitarian and democratic principles cannot fail to endure.

They have faith in their memory of him.

And I hope that we who are fortunate enough to live on this side of the Iron Curtain, also have faith in Masaryk's principles. For in life and in writing, he seems very close to all of us in our troubled days; his thoughts are what we should think if we had his knowledge; his actions are what we should do if we had his character. He can help both those who must struggle first-hand against Communist totalitarianism and those who oppose everywhere the "diminished mind." As I have read more and more in Masaryk, I have been much impressed with the truly modern characteristics of this man, born more than one hundred years ago.

His great work, *The Spirit of Russia*, for instance, is extraordinarily and terribly contemporary in its insights about the Russian character, which has remained quite constant below the surface of recent events. Again, his book, *The Making of a State*, is a most modern political account with all sorts of meaningful passages about the relationships between the democratic state and the democratic individual. And as I read his little

treatise, *How to Work*, I couldn't help but be reminded of a similar volume by John Dewey entitled *Problems of Man*—both are similar in concept and both are similar in their philosophy of practical consequences.

So, in many parts of his general philosophy, T. G. Masaryk was as up-to-date as the most sophisticated professor or the most astute, successful politician. He differed from the politician, however, in his unplatitudinous and brilliant manner of expressing ideas. Take, for example, his concept of democracy—almost a shopworn term of inspiration in the vocabulary of today's speechmakers. To Masaryk, democracy was no easy system to be lauded on the 4th of July as a simple function of majority opinions. In his mind, it was the most difficult of all systems and a function of morality and science. More profoundly, it was a function of a whole philosophy of cultural history. Masaryk said in *The New Europe* (p. 68) "Democracy is after all discussion. More than that, it is the administration of the affairs of all in the best interests of all. It is the interweaving of interests in which the maximum consideration is given to the otherwise forgotten person. It cannot be static or yet indifferent to the common good of all people."

Again, in *The Spirit of Russia*, he says, "Democracy consists in the unloosening of every energy and, in consequence, it is the ceaseless search for union of all the vital forces in the nation." Masaryk's search for union of all the vital forces in the nation led him to a profound study of modern man in modern Europe.

Along these lines, I think it is constructive to look at what Masaryk said about today's enemy of democracy—Marxist Communism. He wrote, "Revolution or dictatorship can sometimes abolish bad things, but they never create good and lasting ones. Impatience is fatal in politics. When I consider that all recorded human history goes back only some 10,000 years or so, and that we are still on the threshold of civilization, how can I sup-



pose that some fanatic, either imperialist or revolutionary, will definitely complete our development at one stroke?" Much has been and will be written about world communism, but Masaryk here spoke a most acute criticism of our present day threat to democracy. In essence, Masaryk was asking whether it was wise to tolerate an absolutely certain evil in the present, in order to gain a relatively uncertain good in the future. Can the Communists today answer this question?

And what did Masaryk say about the love of his country? For over 300 years, his country, Czechoslovakia, was dismembered and under alien rule; when final unification and independence came to it, Masaryk did not feel the same arrogant pride or aggressive exaltation which so characterized Bismarck's Germany after its unification in the last half of the 19th Century. Masaryk said quietly, "A normal individual does not go about trumpeting abroad the fact that he loves his parents, his wife, his children; that is taken for granted. If you love your country, don't talk about it but do something worthwhile for it. That is all that matters. . . . I was always held back by a kind of shame from saying the words, "my country," "my nation." I don't cry aloud that I am a patriot, and I don't cry out against another for being a traitor to his country; I must patiently prove that his way is wrong for such and such reason."

It need not be pointed out who today, even in America, should listen to this wit and wisdom of Masaryk. I quote him here because his very freshness of expression seems to have an original and modern appeal. It is as if he has said something that we have always thought about, but somehow never quite put into words.

I suppose it is true of all great men—the words of Lincoln or the writings of Plato express our own unexpressed thoughts and emotions. They have a familiar pertinence to some men in all centuries, because they set forth the perennial human condition that confronts all men at all times. Reinhold Niebuhr

has said that there are no ultimate solutions in human history; and in this sense the life and times of T. G. Masaryk are most exactly the biography of modern man pitting all the force of his intellect and character against age-old inexorable powers.

But the longer I study the writings of Masaryk, the more I feel how completely he was a man of the 19th Century, as well as a model for our own times. The epoch of history in which he lived was symbolized by the suppression of the 1848 revolutions two years before his birth, and by the German lancers clattering down the ancient Roman roads of Belgium on a summer afternoon in 1914, when the order of 19th Century Europe lay dying.

Masaryk lived a long while after this period, but he was essentially conditioned by this older order of Europe which was so vastly different in texture and intensity from our own world.

His public battles, for instance, were strictly battles of the 19th Century. They were battles, generally, that have long since disappeared into the encyclopedias of European history; but all were, nonetheless, terribly important at the time in establishing the integrity of the Czechoslovak nation. Masaryk quarrelled with the politicians over the true facts of Czech history (Battle of the Manuscripts); he fought with the laymen over the superstitions of Jewish ritual murder (Hilsner affair); he argued with the clergy over the necessity of a forthright and informed religion; he opposed the Austrian diplomats in their international intrigues; and he struggled endlessly to persuade the men of Versailles that the Czech question was a world issue. These matters are now problems of the past—of interest to the historian but not especially relevant to our different trials today.

Quite naturally, Masaryk's philosophy was also the result of the confluence of 19th Century streams of thought. He was deeply read in Locke, Hume, Auguste Comte, and John Stuart Mill. He once said, "I overcome the Slav anarchy in myself by the help of the British philosophers Locke, Hume,



and other empiricists." But he also retained the Slav models in his philosophy, especially as represented in the forceful personalities of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. So, West and East were delicately balanced in his mind, not on any low level of intuition but on the highest level of intellectual comprehension. He was not the tourist whose impressions of a foreign philosophy fade rapidly after the visit. He was the informed inhabitant of every philosophy that he studied. He integrated ideas into his understanding, not merely wore them on his sleeve. Quite naturally, he became deeply absorbed in the thinking of the European 19th Century.

There were other examples of what I may call, with no disrespect intended, Masaryk's 19th Century provincialism. I think much can be told from the content of a man's anxieties. In his life, one of Masaryk's primary apprehensions was the subjugation of Czechoslovak democracy by some form of authoritarianism. This was authoritarianism of the old school. He thought and feared in terms of Hapsburg absolutism or even Russian hegemony, but not in terms of the 20th Century terrors of totalitarianism which have swept over Germany, the Soviet Union, and now his own country. The very dangers he feared are today an anachronism.

In retrospect, even his later writings reflect a clear liberal optimism which is perhaps a little too cheerful for our own world, so often grown muddy with lies. One of my colleagues—a Czechoslovak exile—told me the other day that Masaryk had a copy of *Mein Kampf* on his desk in the last years of his life. So, perhaps he did have an appreciation of the ominous peril of the coming Naziism. But, somehow, I don't believe he fully recognized the extent of control over the radio, press, factory, school, trade union, and lecture hall which modern totalitarianisms have exercised. All of this means to me that Masaryk was so totally a 19th Century man, so wholly alive to the problems of his time that he had little inclination for conjecture or

prophecy. Perhaps it can be said that Masaryk was so deeply immersed in the waters of his own history that he had no opportunity to pick out those rocks and shoals of the 20th Century which were foreseen by other contemporaries, such as de Tocqueville, one hundred years ago; or Orwell and Karel Capek, more recently.

And so Masaryk's life and work can be viewed as both strikingly modern and, at the same time, entirely representative of all that was best in the liberal democratic world of the 19th Century. He was similar to all great men who portray in their careers this balance between contemporaneity and characterization of an epoch's distinctive qualities.

Before I conclude my thoughts with you this evening, I want to mention two other things that have impressed me in my reading of Masaryk. First, that gracious person, Dr. Alice Masaryk, told me once that any real understanding of her father would have to include his belief in the religious foundations of democracy. And it is true;—in the later years of his life, he spoke time and again of the moral basis of state policy. Masaryk's religion, however, was not made up of simple belief or fanatic convictions. He was as wary of the misuse of religion as he was convinced of its deep importance in the lives of democratic individuals. As he put it, "Spiritual absolutism . . . (must) give place to a more exalted morality, a higher degree of humanity, and a loftier religion which will freely guide the whole of our public life." Masaryk said it once even more briefly, "Christ, not Caesar, is the meaning of history."

And, lastly, I would like to suggest that our world today could make good use of Masaryk's concept of realism. Unlike the German idea of Realpolitik or the cynical disregard of principles, realism to Masaryk meant a *moral realism*. More accurately, it meant a *full realism* which takes into account ideals and principles along with concrete actualities of the moment.

Practically speaking, Masaryk thought the only safe guide



in public and private life was an honesty going beyond ingenuousness, and a quality of character that treats rather than evades reality. Most clearly, Masaryk as statesman and philosopher was a full realist; and in this sense he was a promising example for all of us to emulate in our times.

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